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Members of Presidential Panel Question Witnesses on Campus Unrest

The New York Times (by Mike Lien)

Revius O. Ortique Jr. questions a witness. Flanking him are William W. Scranton, chairman, and Joseph Rhodes Jr.

The New York Times

Edward M. Kennedy
Massachusetts Democrat

Robbin W. Fleming
University of Michigan

Charles F. Palmer
National Student Assn.

Dr. S. I. Hayakawa
San Francisco State

The New York Times

Hugh Scott
Pennsylvania Republican

WAR CALLED ROOT OF CAMPUS STRIFE

Witnesses Tell Nixon Panel Hypocrisy on Race, Drugs and Sex Are Also Causes

By JACK ROSENTHAL
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 15 — There can be no peace on the nation's campuses until there is peace in Vietnam, witness after witness told the President's Commission on Campus Unrest today.

Senators, educators and students all bore the same message as the new commission opened three days of public hearings in an oak and marble Senate hearing room floodlighted for four television networks.

The commission, witnesses said, will not find solutions to the tremors felt in scores of universities solely through campus reforms. The deepest problems flow from the larger society, they said.

They spoke of hypocritical attitudes about sex and drugs, racial discrimination and "divisive" Administration rhetoric. But most of all they spoke of the Vietnam war.

It may well be that the only thing in the commission's report that will have any real meaning for our colleges and universities is the line that reads, 'the war must end,'" said Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts.

"An end to the use of American troops in Vietnam will not end campus unrest, but it will more than anything else to

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help contain it," said Robbin W. Fleming, president of the University of Michigan.

Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, the Senate Republican leader, said, "It is more fashionable than reasonable" to attribute student discontent to the war and wondered why it had not erupted during the Johnson Administration, when the war was expanding, rather than now, as the American role was decreasing.

The commission must report on the causes of campus disorders and possible solutions to the President by Oct. 1.

The Administration gave new evidence today that it would be receptive to the commission's recommendations. Vice President Agnew invited its chairman, William W. Scranton, former Governor of Pennsylvania, to lunch at the White House.

Mr. Agnew has publicly assailed the views of Joseph Rhodes Jr., the only student member of the commission, but Mr. Scranton said after the luncheon that "I got the impression Mr. Agnew does not intend to take issue" with the commission or its proceedings.

Mr. Scranton said that the commission's report would be addressed to the President, rather than to the public, in terms of a national crisis.

Cambodia Move Scored

In the hearings, witnesses repeatedly described the sending of American troops into Cambodia as the prime cause of unrest.

"Prior to Cambodia," Mr. Fleming said, "I believe the majority of the students were reluctantly accepting our Government's intention to withdraw from Vietnam.

"Cambodia hit them like a thunderbolt. With no advance preparation, students saw what appeared to be a complete reversal of the Government's policy and a broadening of the war in Asia."

Charles F. Palmer, president of the National Student Association, said that the impact of Cambodia was strongest "on the straight, middle-class students who reacted with their guts."

"They were the ones who felt most betrayed," he said.

The war issue also underlay the testimony of S. I. Hayakawa, the president of San Francisco State College, who contended that unrest was due to the boredom of immature but bright students.

A prime reason for their restlessness, he said, is that they are trapped by the knowledge that to leave school is to give up their student deferments from the draft.

"The truly guilty party," said another witness, J. Otis Cochran, chairman of the Black American Law Students Association, "is the Nixon-Agnew Administration, whose crude attacks on dissenters have created the climate of intolerance and repression that some people interpreted as a license to kill.

"What hope is there for advocates of peaceful protest if each new week brings another ill-conceived attack from Agnew's thesaurus of invectives?"

Another problem, Mr. Fleming told the Commission, is that older people "lump younger people together so."

"Students," he said, "ask how their elders can possibly be so outraged at their beards, which make them look like the heroes of the Civil War period, or their long hair, which makes them look like the heroes of the American Revolution, and still be complacent about the use of napalm and the destruction of villages far from our shores."

Senator Kennedy was the only witness who spoke in detail about law enforcement.

"The most destructive campus violence has not been student violence," he said. "It has been official violence."

He recalled the deaths of four students at Kent State University and two at Jackson State College last May.

"It appears to me that the National Guard at Kent State was in direct violation of the standards set forth in the Army Field Manual under which all guardsmen are trained," he said.

Mr. Palmer, 23 years old, spoke of school administrators' actions that "go beyond the ridiculous and stupid."

He said that school administrations and the Nixon Administration were preoccupied with phrases such as "peaceful dissent" and "orderly expression."

"'Orderly' has rightfully become a code word among students that means dissent that is doomed by definition to failure," he said.

He catalogued what he described as arbitrary examples of university officials' conduct. In one case, he said, a Middle Western college president agreed with students that a disciplinary ruling could not stand up in court and yet told the students that they would have to get a court order before he would change the ruling.

Mr. Fleming spoke of the presence "on every large campus" of a small but violent group of students and nonstudents.

"They are utterly totalitarian," he said, "and totally beyond reason. A number of them have severe psychiatric problems."